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Thursday, 19 August 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 70 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/64/L.66)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Members will recall that the Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 70, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", and its sub-items (a) and (b), as well as agenda item 71, "Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence", at its 59th and 60th plenary meetings, on 7 December 2009.

I should like to proudly note that my country, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, is one of the Member States that, through their letter to me dated 8 August 2010, asked for this meeting to be convened in order to show solidarity with the affected country.

At the outset, I would like to thank the ministers and high-ranking officials who are with us at this meeting to demonstrate the great importance that they attach to it. I would also like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his important efforts and for the visit he made to Pakistan. I thank him very much indeed and assure him once again that we stand with him in providing support to sisterly Pakistan and all affected citizens of that country.

As we meet, an unprecedented humanitarian disaster is unfolding in Pakistan. A staggering 20 million people stand affected by heavy rains and devastating floods. The number was estimated at around 14 million only six days ago, when I decided to convene this meeting. The pace at which this crisis has escalated is astounding. The resultant human tragedy is heart-rending. As they await help, hundreds of thousands of survivors are at serious risk. This is an extraordinary emergency situation. It requires an extraordinary response.

Today's meeting is a part of that response. It is also a direct and timely manifestation of the extraordinary convening power of the General Assembly. The high-level participation reflects the seriousness attached to the situation by the international community. This meeting, I am sure, will send out a strong message to Pakistan and its people that the world stands by them in these difficult times. It is a solemn occasion to express our solidarity and sympathy with the affected populations. More than that, today's meeting is demonstrative of the international community's commitment to act, an opportunity to step forward and show to the people and the Government of Pakistan that we are ready and willing to assist them in every possible way.

Natural and environmental disasters have also recently struck other parts of Asia and beyond, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. Severe

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flooding and landslides in China have taken a heavy toll, with more than 1,200 people killed and hundreds still missing. There has been significant destruction and loss of life due to floods in India. In Russia, wildfires have killed dozens of people and erased whole villages and city suburbs, affecting thousands more. Let me convey our condolences and solidarity with all the affected populations on these tragic losses.

Coming back to Pakistan, it is there that we are confronted with one of the most challenging disasters in recent years. I commend the efforts and determination of the people and the Government of Pakistan in coping with the situation. However, given the magnitude of the challenge, they cannot do it alone. International assistance must complement and support the national efforts.

The immensity and scale of this catastrophe is shocking. More than 10 per cent of the population of Pakistan is now affected. An estimated 20 per cent of the land area is reportedly under water. Millions of people are in immediate need of food, clean drinking water, emergency health services and shelter. We are in a race against time in reaching out to these people with the required assistance. The response so far has not been sufficient, due mainly to lack of supplies, and the relief and rescue work has also been hampered by infrastructure damage and continuing rains. To save lives, in particular to prevent the serious threat of water-borne diseases, we must act faster. That is the immediate priority.

It is encouraging that many Member States have stepped forward to help. The United Nations system has led the international response, providing food, clean water and temporary shelter to many. But many more are yet to be reached. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was himself on the ground. The United Nations has launched an initial appeal for $460 million to meet the most immediate needs. To date, barely half of that amount has been pledged. I call on all Member States to urgently bridge this gap.

Beyond this initial phase, a far greater and sustained commitment and support will be required for long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. Displacement of people, wide-scale destruction of homes, standing crops, livestock and other means of livelihood, in addition to extensive damage to roads, bridges, schools, health facilities and other infrastructure, means billions of dollars of loss to the economy, with exact figures yet to be evaluated. This will be a huge undertaking.

The draft resolution that I have presented to the Assembly in document A/64/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan", is in my view an important and timely response by this Assembly to the situation at hand. It serves three main purposes: first, it expresses strong solidarity with Pakistan and the people affected by floods; secondly, it calls for international assistance in support of the efforts of the Government of Pakistan; and thirdly, it focuses on both the emergency phase and the medium- and long-term phases requiring rehabilitation and reconstruction.

It thus provides an excellent framework for the international community to translate the expression of its solidarity by mobilizing and extending tangible support and assistance to Pakistan. Its adoption with the Assembly's full support and consensus will be but one measure of hope and relief to the affected populations in Pakistan, letting them know that the world cares and that help is on its way.

I would also like to raise two important points. First, we must support the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund in every way we can so that it can intervene in emergency situations such as this. Secondly, we must henceforth be alert and work together in dealing with climate change and its consequences. We need also to take the issue of climate change very seriously so that the forthcoming conference in Mexico will be a new opportunity for a change of attitude.

I pay tribute once again to the Secretary-General for all his efforts, and now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I would like to thank the representatives of Member States for coming together for the people of Pakistan.

Visiting Pakistan on Sunday, I was honoured to carry with me the sympathy and solidarity of all the world's peoples. This is what I saw: village after village washed away; roads, bridges and homes destroyed; crops and livelihoods wiped out. I met many women and men, who have very little in the best of times, awash in a sea of suffering. They shared their fears of the next wave — the next wave of water, the next wave of disease, the next wave of destruction.

The eyes see, the ears hear, yet somehow the mind struggles to grasp the full dimension of this catastrophe. Almost 20 million people need shelter, food and emergency care. That is more than the entire population hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Kashmir earthquake, Cyclone Nargis and the earthquake in Haiti combined. At least 160,000 square kilometres of land are under water — an area larger than more than half the countries of the world. Make no mistake: this is a global disaster and a global challenge. It is one of the greatest tests of global solidarity in our times.

I therefore want to thank the international community for all that it has already done. Thanks to its help, we are feeding people and providing clean water, medicine and shelter. United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and aid groups such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent have mobilized to support the Government's response. We are getting the aid in by whatever means — helicopters, trucks and even mules. Nearly 1 million people have received a month's food rations from the World Food Programme.

Similar numbers now have emergency shelter and clean water, helped by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration and many others. The World Health Organization is treating health threats as they arise. But the needs are great and this disaster is far from over. The rains could continue for weeks, and only now are we beginning to understand the true scope of the disaster.

Pakistan is facing a slow-motion tsunami. Its destructive power will accumulate and grow with time. I have discussed this harsh reality with President Zardari and Prime Minister Gillani. We fully agree on what must be done.

International humanitarian organizations are straining every muscle to deliver, but they need massive additional support. Eight million people need food, water and shelter; 14 million need health care, with a special emphasis on children and pregnant women. We have issued an emergency appeal for $460 million over the next 90 days. We already have more than half — about 60 per cent — thanks to the generosity of key donors, but all of those resources are needed and they are needed now.

Pledges made today must be followed up with action — action that delivers change on the ground. And when the waters finally recede, recovery and reconstruction must begin. Agricultural losses alone will exceed $1 billion, according to the World Bank. Farmers will need seeds, fertilizers and tools to replant, lest next year's harvest be lost along with this one. In the longer term, the huge damage to infrastructure — schools, hospitals, irrigation canals, communications, transport links — must be repaired.

We are considering convening a high-level meeting on Pakistan when world leaders gather for the Millennium Development Goals summit in September. In October, the Friends of Democratic Pakistan will meet in Brussels to explore these matters in depth. And ultimately, we must recognize that climate change will bring more incidents of extreme weather. That is why we must invest more in reducing the risk of future disasters.

The United Nations has made disaster risk reduction a priority. In 2005 the Hyogo Framework offered a pragmatic blueprint for action. Last year, we introduced the first global assessment report on disaster risk reduction. Clearly, we must follow through on these recommendations.

This disaster is like few the world has ever seen. It requires a response to match. Pakistan needs a flood of support, yet in the media we hear talk of so-called fatigue. There are suggestions that Governments are reluctant to cope with yet another disaster — that they hesitate to contribute more to that part of the world. But let us remember that if anyone should be fatigued, it is the ordinary people I met in Pakistan — women, children and small farmers tired of troubles, conflict and hardship. Instead of fatigue, however, I saw determination, resilience and the hope and expectation that they will not be alone under the darkest of skies.

When faced with the tsunami, the earthquake in Haiti and other natural disasters, we showed extraordinary humanity. Let us do so again today. Together, let us stand with the people of Pakistan. Let us act so that this natural disaster does not become a man-made catastrophe. Let us give this our all.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for

Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. I welcome him to the United Nations and express our fullest solidarity with his country.

Mr. Qureshi (Pakistan): I convey to you, Sir, the gratitude of the people and Government of Pakistan for this timely initiative to convene a plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from floods in Pakistan.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Pakistan and the humanitarian crisis caused by the floods. The people of Pakistan have deeply appreciated the Secretary-General's close personal engagement in the rescue and relief operations in Pakistan, and his visit to the affected areas.

I would also like to thank the honourable ministers for their presence to express solidarity and support to the people of Pakistan.

What we face in Pakistan today is a natural calamity of unprecedented proportions. These are the worst monsoon floods in living memory. According to the United Nations reports, the present humanitarian crisis in Pakistan is larger than the combined effects of the tsunami and the 2005 earthquake.

Pakistanis are a resilient people. We are no strangers to challenges and difficulties. This is a nation that suffered the ravages of the 2005 earthquake and bravely bore the loss of 80,000 of our brethren. We are the people who, with relentless courage and determination, have borne the brunt of the international fight against terrorism and extremism. This is the nation that has braced itself with fortitude against the loss of thousands of its men, women and children to suicide attacks. We are the people that the international community looks towards as a bulwark against terrorism and extremism. This is the nation that now looks towards the international community to show a similar determination and humanity in its hour of need.

The situation is indeed critical and alarming. I stand before the General Assembly as the voice of 20 million Pakistanis devastated by the floods, who have lost their homes and hearths, their kith and kin, their lands and their crops, their lives and their livelihoods. One in 10 Pakistanis has been rendered destitute. Twenty per cent of our land is submerged in water.

Ours is primarily an agrarian economy. Seventy per cent of our population is employed in the agriculture sector, and that is where we have been hit the hardest. Over 17 million acres of agricultural land has been submerged. Standing crops worth billions of dollars have been destroyed. Over 3.5 million children are at high risk of contracting deadly waterborne diseases. Schools will not be opening soon after summer vacations, as they are being used to provide shelter to flood survivors.

In the province of Punjab, almost 1 million acres of cotton growing area is affected, and crops worth $1 billion have been destroyed. In the South, standing crops worth $1.2 billion over an area of 100,000 acres face complete destruction in Sindh province. In the North, over 325,000 acres of land stand submerged, and crops worth $500 million have been destroyed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In Balochistan, villages and towns are being inundated as I speak. Over 70 per cent of the roads and bridges in the flood-stricken areas have been destroyed, with none remaining intact in the Swat valley. Over 1 million tons of wheat stored in warehouses has been swept away.

Unfortunately, these are only initial estimates, and the situation is still evolving. The situation is expected to get worse as the second and third waves of floods inundate more lands and uproot more people. The numbers will surely go up as the waters recede and the affected areas become accessible to damage assessment. The aftermath of the floods in the medium to long terms will pose more daunting challenges. The reconstruction and rehabilitation costs are going to be huge, but our immediate challenge is to meet the food, health and clean drinking water needs of the millions displaced, and to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed by the floods.

Our difficulties do not end there. Our urban infrastructure will come under severe stress as millions of people migrate to bigger cities in search of shelter and jobs. Another serious problem with long-term socio-economic implications is the loss of land and potential decline in the arability of flood-affected lands. The food security of the sixth most populous country in the world is at risk. The possible threat of food riots and related violence cannot be ruled out.

The Government of Pakistan has mobilized all its national resources to provide rescue and relief to the affected people. Hundreds of thousands have been

rescued and evacuated from riverine areas. Provision of food, shelter and clean drinking water and prevention of water-borne diseases and epidemics remain our top priorities. The entire nation stands united and determined to overcome this challenge. The people of Pakistan have opened up their hearts and hearths to their brothers and sisters.

We are also determined to turn around the economy destroyed by the floods. We have decided to set up an independent national entity to mobilize maximum domestic resources and to ensure their effective and transparent use. This entity will comprise men of integrity who will supervise the collection, management and distribution of relief funds among the flood-affected people.

Our commitment and resolve notwithstanding, the scale of the challenge is colossal, far too big for any developing country to handle alone. We hope that the international community will come forward in all earnestness. We trust that we will be provided with much-needed support to augment our national relief and rescue efforts.

The people of Pakistan greatly appreciate the launch of a $460-million Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan by the United Nations, for relief and immediate recovery of the affected people. We have also requested the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to assist the Government of Pakistan in carrying out a comprehensive damage needs assessment. We hope that it will be completed at the earliest possible date.

This disaster has hit us hard at a time, and in areas, where we are in the midst of fighting a war against extremists and terrorists. The people of Pakistan have stood by their brave security forces in the fight against terrorism. Our successes have been lauded by the international community, but these successes have come at a heavy price. More than 10,000 innocent civilians have fallen victim to terrorism, and more than 2,500 Pakistani soldiers have given their lives. Our material losses exceed $43 billion.

The gains that we have made against the terrorists are substantial. Yet we remain exposed. The peace and relative calm achieved as a result of the democratic Government's relentless efforts are still fragile and need to be consolidated. The massive upheaval caused by the floods and the economic losses suffered by millions of Pakistanis must be addressed urgently. If we fail, it could undermine the hard-won gains made by the Government in our difficult and painful war against terrorism. We cannot allow this catastrophe to become an opportunity for the terrorists.

Climate change, with all its severity and unpredictability, has become a reality for 170 million Pakistanis. The present situation in Pakistan reconfirms our extreme vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change. It also complicates the reconstruction and rehabilitation scenario in Pakistan. Nature has made a graphic endorsement to strengthen the case for a fair and equitable outcome from the ongoing United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations.

The sympathy and solidarity that I witness here today from all present is very reassuring. I wish to go back to Islamabad with a clear message for the people of Pakistan that they are not alone in this hour of trial and that the international community stands ready to support and assist them. We look forward to the international community's help in undertaking immediate relief measures and addressing the long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation needs of affected people and areas.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now take action on draft resolution A/64/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.66?

Draft resolution A/64/L.66 was adopted (resolution 64/294).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to The Honourable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Ms. Clinton (United States of America): I listened with great interest and concern as Foreign Minister Qureshi detailed, with sombre eloquence and painful specificity, what the people and Government of Pakistan are facing today.

We are here, at the request of the Government of Pakistan, to help them respond to the worst natural disaster in their history. As Foreign Minister Qureshi pointed out, the flooding, which has affected more than

20 million Pakistanis — more than the population of New York State — is so enormous that it is almost hard to fathom. And the rain continues to fall, so the extent of the devastation is difficult to gauge.

This flooding has already affected more people than the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Haiti earthquake and the 2005 Pakistan earthquake combined. And, as we meet, we fear that a new wave of water may be about to sweep through areas that have already been devastated and reach those yet untouched.

My thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost loved ones and who have been displaced from their homes and left without food and water. The United States has taken, and continues to take, swift action to help, and on behalf of President Obama and the American people, I want to state our resolve to help Pakistan to meet the immediate crisis and then to recover from it.

I want the people of Pakistan to know that the United States will stand with you during this crisis. We will be with you as rivers rise and fall. We will be with you as you replant your fields and repair your roads. We will be with you as you meet the long-term challenges to build a stronger nation and a better future.

Under the direction of the Government of Pakistan and the National Disaster Management Authority, the United States has been working since the earliest days of the flooding to provide assistance to those it can reach and who need it most. Our civilian helicopters began assisting in relief efforts almost immediately. American military helicopters were redirected to rescue Pakistanis within hours of the Pakistani Government's request for help. Less than a day later, American military aircraft began delivering 400,000 hallal meals from storehouses in Dubai.

These efforts continue, and, to date, United States aircraft have carried more than 6,000 Pakistanis to safety and distributed more than a million pounds of relief supplies. We have also provided enough heavy-duty waterproof sheeting to construct temporary shelters for more than 100,000 people, and we have supplied the Pakistani Government with rescue boats, concrete-cutting saws, water filtration units and a dozen prefabricated bridges.

The initial response by the Pakistani Government and people, the United States and the international community has helped to alleviate suffering and save lives. But the combined efforts so far pale against the magnitude of the challenge.

It is difficult to overstate the scope of this catastrophe. And, unfortunately, we believe it is likely to get worse before it gets better. More than 800,000 homes have already been damaged or destroyed. Two million people have been forced to flee. Hundreds of bridges have been washed away, cutting off communities from relief supplies. As the Foreign Minister said, so much of this year's agricultural production has been wiped out, and farmers' submerged fields cannot be replanted this season. Many communities face shortages of clean drinking water and are vulnerable to cholera and other epidemics.

Experts predict that the flooding will not recede until mid-September, and if the monsoon rains continue, the devastation will spread to new areas, driving yet more people from their homes.

So we know we face a humanitarian disaster of monumental proportions, and it is creating economic and security problems. Here at the United Nations, we often speak of a desire to forge a more humane fellowship with humankind, and today we must match that aspiration with action.

Now, I realize that many countries, including my own, are facing tough economic conditions and very tight budgets. We have also endured an unrelenting stream of disasters this year, from the earthquake in Haiti to the wildfires in Russia. But we must answer the Pakistani request for help.

On 11 August, the United Nations issued a $459 million emergency flood response plan, and asked for the international community to respond. At the outset of this meeting today, existing pledges of assistance put us halfway towards that goal. That is a solid start, but we must close the gap.

With a new pledge that I am making today, of $60 million, the United States will be contributing more than $150 million towards emergency flood relief. Approximately $92 million of that total is in direct support of the United Nations relief plan. These funds are being use to provide critical supplies and support operations of the Pakistan National Disaster Management Authority and other organizations inside Pakistan. The United States is providing technical

assistance and mobilizing military and civilian resources as well.

Today I want to call on the American public and American corporations to support these relief efforts. Every dollar makes a difference, and Americans can send help to Pakistan by contributing to the Department of State's Pakistan Relief Fund. Please, go to www.state.gov/pakistanrelief, or make a $10 contribution through your mobile phone by texting the word "flood" to the number 27722.

Beyond our immediate response, the United States is committed to the long-term goal of working with Pakistan to improve conditions in the country. We demonstrated that commitment with a multi-year, $7.5 billion non-military assistance package, authorized by the Congress and agreed to by the President. We will now take some of those funds that were directed to initiatives that I announced just last month in Islamabad to support Pakistan in its reconstruction efforts.

In all of our work, we are seeking to strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions. Our approach to relief and rebuilding will be based on the same foundation of partnership that we believe is important between our country and Pakistan. It will be up to Pakistan's elected leaders to head up this effort, and those elected officials, in turn, will be accountable to the citizens of Pakistan.

In my visits to Pakistan since becoming Secretary of State, I have spoken often about our desire to build an enduring partnership, and today we are once again reaffirming that commitment. I believe Pakistan will come through this crisis because of the strength, resilience and courage of the people. As we meet today during the holy month of Ramadan, we must all embrace a spirit of compassion and make it our mission to provide that relief.

A few days ago, an American helicopter rescued a pregnant women who was about to give birth. They were able to carry her to safety. Her home was under water. She was facing complications that could have claimed her life and the life of her child. Like all Pakistanis affected by the floods, this mother and baby still face many difficulties in the months and years ahead. But they will have an opportunity to rebuild their community and to contribute to a strong, secure, prosperous Pakistan. I believe in that baby's future.

Civilization has thrived on the banks of the Indus River for more than 5,000 years. It will continue, and if we come together now, we can meet this challenge and ensure that future generations in Pakistan have the opportunity to realize their own God-given potential.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Steven Vanackere, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

Mr. Vanackere (Belgium): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the European Union (EU) for all 27 Member States, our European institutions and our citizens, and also to bring a special message of support from the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, who would have liked to represent the European Union here today and who is looking forward to the time when that will be possible.

I would like first of all to express our solidarity with and our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan following the tragic loss of life in the monsoon floods in the North and centre of the country. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, our minds struggle to grasp the full dimension of this catastrophe, of this slow-motion tsunami. We share the grief of the affected families and express our heartfelt sympathy with those who have lost so much as a result of this unprecedented catastrophe.

The European Union welcomes the adoption today by the General Assembly of resolution 64/294, which encourages the international community to help Pakistan. I can assure the General Assembly that the European Union and all of its member States will contribute to the full implementation of the resolution.

The European Union is actively participating in the immediate global response to this humanitarian disaster and strongly supports the efforts of the United Nations and the Pakistani authorities as they provide vital assistance to those in need. I would like to stress one thing: We will continue to support this work as long as is needed. The international community is in this for the long term. The EU will work with Pakistan to mitigate the impact of this disaster on the daily lives and well-being of the Pakistani people.

The European Union and Pakistan share a long-lasting friendship. Last June, the second EU-Pakistan summit set the basis for a strategic dialogue, which includes the promotion of disaster risk reduction and

the effective provision of humanitarian assistance. Before this disaster, the European Union had already allocated more than €400 million in assistance to Pakistan for the period 2007-2010 for economic development and trade, as well as for governance and human rights.

Today, I can say that the European Union is considerably stepping up its support for Pakistan and for the Pakistani people. Since the beginning of the crisis, the EU and its member States have committed over €110 million, and I am pleased to announce that this amount will be increased by €30 million, which means that, in total, the European Union has committed more than €140 million, or the equivalent of $180 million. And let me underline that this humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and according to the needs on the ground.

In addition to the humanitarian funds, there are in-kind contributions from a large number of EU member States that need to be coordinated in order to maximize their impact on the ground. That is why the European Union has dispatched a full team of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism to Islamabad.

In the wake of this crisis, there is no room for complacency. The number of people who are in dire need of assistance is rising and will continue to do so as assessments continue and access improves. In order to provide the most adequate and comprehensive response, notably to address the food, sanitation and health needs, the European Union's institutions are working hand in hand.

The EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, together with her colleagues at the European Commission in charge of humanitarian and development aid, is coordinating the EU assessment of both the short- and long-term implications of the crisis. The European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, will be travelling to Pakistan in a few days to underpin EU efforts to assist the victims of this humanitarian disaster and support the coordination efforts of the United Nations and the Pakistani authorities.

As we all know, access remains a major challenge, and we are examining very carefully how all necessary assets can be deployed and mobilized as a matter of priority. But in a region still affected by a conflict that has triggered the displacement of millions of people since 2009, it is crucial that humanitarian aid be perceived as neutral and in line with international humanitarian law and on the basis of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

I would like to particularly stress that point today, the second World Humanitarian Day, which is dedicated to all relief workers, including those who have lost their lives while helping others.

As is the case within the European Union, coordination is also paramount for international actors. The national and provincial Pakistani authorities are clearly leading the response. At the same time, we would encourage all organizations to work with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to strengthen the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance. As we have seen in the case of Haiti, the consequences of a natural disaster can be overwhelming, and it is crucial that all actors cooperate to make the response as effective as possible.

Let me conclude with a few words on Pakistan's security and stability. The EU strongly encourages the international community to support Pakistan in a lasting manner and a durable way. Only if efforts are sustained can there be a long-term recovery. Pakistan will be particularly high on the agenda of the next informal meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers at the beginning of September, and we are looking forward in particular to hosting the Friends of Democratic Pakistan ministerial meeting in October in Brussels, which will provide an opportunity to take stock of the relief provided and plan for rebuilding efforts.

As was said at the beginning of this meeting, humanity is calling. It is in times of adversity that we realize that true solidarity is not only about words and convictions; it is also about actions that make a difference in the lives of people. Let us now make sure that our solidarity is efficient, coordinated and sustained.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Temor Yakobashvili, Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia.

Mr. Yakobashvili (Georgia): To begin, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting to mobilize international efforts to alleviate the effects of the unprecedented humanitarian disaster unfolding in Pakistan.

I would like to convey the sympathy of the people of Georgia to the people of Pakistan, and to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the leadership and courage he has demonstrated at this critical moment. We applaud his prompt response and commend all nations that have demonstrated international solidarity with the people in the afflicted areas of Pakistan.

My country is well aware of the hardships caused by forced displacement. Coping with displacement on the scale seen here is an extremely difficult challenge for any Government and often requires concerted international efforts. The hardships faced by displaced persons should be alleviated as much as possible in these early days in order to prevent the deepening of the humanitarian crisis.

All displaced persons should be allowed to return to their homes and communities in safety and dignity, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and the international community should begin to support this process as soon as it can be safely executed.

As part of the wider international efforts, the Government of Georgia has decided to allocate $100,000 to the United Nations emergency flash appeal. We fully support the leadership of the United Nations in delivering humanitarian assistance to the people in need and would like to encourage the United Nations and its agencies to continue providing emergency aid. We would also encourage the United Nations to seek ways to meet the needs of those affected with a long-term perspective. It is our experience that displacement often lasts longer than anticipated, and this eventuality must be planned for with so many families in need.

On behalf of the Government of Georgia, I once again extend my deepest sympathy and condolences to the people who have suffered in this dreadful disaster.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Lene Espersen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Ms. Espersen (Denmark): At the outset, I should like to express my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and people of Denmark our sincere and heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with the hard-tried people of Pakistan, who have suffered such tragic loss of human life and livelihood following the devastating floods.

I wish, of course, to associate myself with the statements that have already been made by many of my colleagues, including by my Belgian colleague on behalf of the European Union presidency. I also wish to emphasize at the outset of my statement that the Government of Denmark fully agrees with the Secretary-General's intervention at the opening of this debate. The scale of the natural disaster that has struck Pakistan is so large and so devastating that it calls for nothing less than our full support for the people of Pakistan.

The message is clear. We must act now to help the millions of people trapped in this disaster and to avoid the potentially disastrous long-term impact on the livelihoods of Pakistan's people and the very fabric of Pakistani society.

First, we must pledge and deliver without delay a response with humanitarian assistance that matches the magnitude of this disaster. Secondly, we must move quickly and be ready when the waters recede in order to help the Pakistani people with the means to reconstruct their houses, their villages and their country. And thirdly, we must be ready to continue to support the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people in their long-term effort to build a democratic, stable and prosperous Pakistan free from conflict and poverty.

If we do not respond and if we do not help the people of Pakistan in these challenging times, we quite simply fail in our humanitarian obligation. But the humanitarian disaster could also very well further destabilize an already troubled region.

To effectively meet the challenges, we need more than ever a swift and coordinated international response. The United Nations has, in close coordination with the Pakistani Government, responded to the crisis and launched an initial emergency response plan. Like many others, Denmark responded immediately to this call for assistance, and I call upon all members of the international community to do the same. There is no time to waste. I should like

to commend the United Nations for its constructive cooperation with the Pakistani Government.

Whereas today's meeting is, of course, focused on the humanitarian situation in Pakistan, it is important to see this in context. Pakistan is also toiling with an armed conflict and almost daily horrifying terror attacks against innocent people, organizations and democratic institutions. I wish to express our continued support for the Government of Pakistan's determination to combat and stop the militants and its efforts to strengthen democracy and restore and build governance across the country, not least in such areas as Malakand, Swat and South Waziristan. We look to the Pakistani Government to provide the necessary leadership, courage and vision both in dealing with the immediate situation and urgent needs, and also when facing the more fundamental challenge of strengthening the social contract between the people of Pakistan and the democratically elected Government.

We must act now, and Denmark stands ready to do so. The Danish Government had, at the outset of the floods, already approved $11 million in immediate humanitarian aid and the dispatch of necessary technical experts to Pakistan. We are closely following the situation and constantly reviewing the need for further Danish support, whether in the form of further funding, logistical support or technical assistance.

Implementation is already under way and relief is being provided as we speak. Our engagement builds on long standing ties between Danish humanitarian organizations and local Pakistani organizations on the ground. In addition to our humanitarian response, the Danish Parliament only last week approved a further $22.5 million for medium- and long-term development assistance to Pakistan. The major part of this will be directed to early recovery and reconstruction activities through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund managed by the World Bank and through UNICEF.

There is an imminent risk that the natural disaster will lead to deeper poverty and marginalization in central and remote areas of Pakistan alike. It is therefore more crucial than ever that the international community and the Friends of Democratic Pakistan support the democratic Government in responding to the humanitarian crisis and fighting poverty and extremism. The international community must help Pakistan in this humanitarian crisis and provide support to the Government's long-term efforts to build a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan. This and nothing less is what the situation demands.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lawrence Cannon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Cannon (Canada): On behalf of the Canadian people, I should like to begin by offering my deepest condolences to all those who have been and are still so cruelly affected by the terrible natural disaster in Pakistan.

I thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting.

The floods in Pakistan serve as a powerful reminder that every day millions of people worldwide require urgent humanitarian assistance. Clearly, the humanitarian needs resulting from the floods require an immediate and sustained international commitment. Canada will continue to be part of that response.

Canada has heard the call of the Secretary-General on the international community to provide immediate support and assistance to the people of Pakistan. In this regard, we fully support resolution 64/294 and its emphasis on supporting the Government of Pakistan as it seeks to meet the urgent needs of its people.

Canada has acted quickly to respond to the devastation caused by the floods. Immediately after the first wave of flooding, Canada announced a contribution of $2 million to meet urgent humanitarian needs.

(*spoke in French*)

Following the launch of the initial flood emergency response plan for Pakistan by the United Nations on 11 August, Canada announced that we would provide up to $33 million in response to the immediate needs of flood-affected Pakistanis. Of those funds, up to $25 million will be provided for humanitarian assistance to help meet such priority needs as access to food, water, sanitation, emergency medical care, shelter and essential household goods. The remaining $8 million will be used to acquire materials urgently needed by the country. That will include, for instance, the building of bridges to help the Government of Pakistan to restore access to communities cut off by the flooding and to help local

authorities to provide security to those affected by the disaster.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada has a long-standing and valued friendship with Pakistan. We were one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan, and have maintained a strong development partnership for over 40 years. Canadians have been shaken by the images of devastation and inspired by the resolve and determination of the people of Pakistan to overcome this tragedy.

Canada will continue to work with the Government of Pakistan, United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations on the ground to ensure that our collective assistance reaches the affected populations as quickly and as effectively as possible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Egemen Bağiş, Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator of Turkey.

Mr. Bağiş (Turkey): I would like to begin my statement by reading out a message to the General Assembly from His Excellency Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

> "Pakistan has experienced the most destructive natural disaster of its history. On behalf of my nation and my Government, I would like to express our deepest sorrow for the flood disaster that has shattered the lives of millions of Pakistanis. The Government and the nation of Pakistan have mobilized all their resources against this disaster, but more needs to be done. This is an emergency that needs an appropriate and immediate global response.
>
> "It is not only a necessity but also a humanitarian responsibility for all nations to act in unity and solidarity against this and other disasters. The United Nations is certainly the primary Organization to demonstrate this will. Today is the day to extend a swift, strong and a determined helping hand to Pakistan. Turkey and the Turkish people will remain in solidarity with Pakistan and we will do our best to heal the wounds of the Pakistani people."

In the spirit outlined in the message of Prime Minister Erdoğan, let me continue by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Pakistan for all those who lost their lives as a result of the floods. We wish strength to the bereaved families who lost loved ones.

This is one of the gravest disasters experienced by the international community. The scale of the destruction is unprecedented in its proportions. We highly appreciate the fact that the General Assembly has been convened for this special meeting to discuss this very urgent and important issue, which coincides meaningfully with World Humanitarian Day. I am confident that all of us are here to help mitigate this disaster.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his personal engagement and commitment to Pakistan. The United Nations has a crucial role in evaluating, assisting and coordinating the needs of the affected populations. We praise the leadership of the Secretary-General and applaud United Nations staff for their effective hard work on the ground. We also would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for his leadership.

The tragedy in Pakistan outlines a new challenge for all of us. In the face of such unprecedented natural disasters, it is vital to win the hearts and minds of the affected peoples. Natural disasters can generate social upheaval. Destabilized communities, displaced peoples and personal tragedies can turn into security problems. It is our common responsibility to heal the suffering as quickly as possible. It is encouraging to see that the international community is taking this threat very seriously. This high-level meeting sends the message that the people of Pakistan are not alone.

Our prompt response, political determination, global solidarity, organizational efficiency and logistical success should set an exemplary standard for similar emergencies and disasters in the future. The noble people of Pakistan should hear and feel that their well-being is being taken seriously by the international community and that we stand by them in this dire moment. I am certain that the relief operations will respect Pakistani sovereignty. Similarly, the pride of the Pakistani people should be duly respected during the relief operations.

The welfare and stability of brotherly Pakistan have always been of the utmost priority for Turkey. My nation has always been in full solidarity with the people of Pakistan. Our relationship is time-tested and

unique. Turkey immediately expressed its strong resolve at all levels to support Pakistan, including its readiness to provide humanitarian assistance. That has been unequivocally underlined by President Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan on every occasion.

To date, Turkey has sent four shipments of humanitarian assistance to Pakistan. One hundred and forty tons of humanitarian cargo, worth more than $2 million, have been transferred. The aid sent includes food rations, sheltering equipment and other aid material required by Pakistani authorities. Turkey has also transferred $10 million to Pakistani authorities for urgent needs. Furthermore, the Turkish armed forces will be sending two C-130 cargo planes carrying medical supplies.

I am proud to say that the Turkish Red Crescent and Turkish volunteer organizations and relief associations were among the first international groups to reach Pakistan. They have already distributed supplies in coordination with local authorities. We are also in the process of constructing two field hospitals, which we will staff with health care personnel. Those hospitals will be operational on Saturday.

Moreover, my Government has initiated an additional nationwide people-to-people donation campaign that will reflect the Turkish nation's warm feelings towards Pakistan during this holy month of Ramadan. The Turkish business world is also leading another campaign, with our chambers of commerce taking the lead by making a $1-million donation. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency of Religious Affairs will also initiate similar campaigns in the very near future. Yesterday, the Organization of the Islamic Conference held an extraordinary session in Jeddah on this matter. Turkey participated actively in that meeting.

The international community — including the United Nations system, major development partners and the European Union — are facing yet another test against an enormous catastrophe. This plenary meeting, the ongoing global efforts and the responses voiced from this rostrum are all very encouraging. This should be a long-term and well-coordinated effort. As a first step, we need to have an effective outcome from this meeting, along with resolution 64/294, which we have just adopted.

As always, our bigger challenge will start after the floodwaters subside and once the emergency is over. We should remain vigilant and focused on Pakistan until normalcy returns to the displaced millions. Our attention span should not be limited to the evening news. The region, the continent and the world cannot afford another case of instability. Turkey will be at the forefront of this great humanitarian effort. As always, our message is peace at home and peace in the world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden.

Ms. Carlsson (Sweden): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting, which offers an opportunity for the international community to reiterate its solidarity with the Pakistani people, along with an exchange of views on our future engagements. Sweden supports the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

On behalf of the Swedish Government and people, let me express our deepest sympathy with the people of Pakistan. The floods that have ravaged that country have caused unprecedented damage. So far, approximately 20 million have been affected. Along with loss of lives, there is a large number of displaced, and homes, livelihoods and infrastructure have endured extensive damage. Sweden is deeply concerned by the severe situation and wishes to extend its assurance of committed, strong support to Pakistan.

Sweden appreciates the good cooperation between the Pakistan Government and the United Nations, resulting in the response plan. The Swedish contribution to the flood response so far amounts to $11 million. I am pleased to announce that Sweden tomorrow will take a decision to commit another $8.2 million in support of the international efforts to help the Pakistani people in this crisis. We will ensure support, not least to the most vulnerable. That is why we also, on a regular and annual basis, provide core funding to major humanitarian organizations, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF. I assure the General Assembly that we will continue to assume our responsibility.

The situation in Pakistan, like the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, demonstrates the importance of a well-coordinated international humanitarian system in order to ensure a quick and efficient response. In

recent years, we have put a great deal of effort into developing the humanitarian response system under the leadership of the United Nations. Sweden remains strongly committed to the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in this regard. The efficient functioning of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a key enabler of an initial humanitarian response serves as an excellent example. Sweden is one of the two largest donors to CERF. We urge Member States to enhance their contributions to that mechanism.

Protracted armed conflicts, population growth, urbanization, increased food prices and climate change are sources of tremendous and increasingly complex challenges. Not least, severe natural catastrophes, as we have seen in Pakistan, require the development of a proactive approach alongside a reactive humanitarian response system. To that end, we need to focus even more of our efforts on preparedness and prevention. The international humanitarian community must be as efficient in providing mechanisms in this field as it is in developing the humanitarian response system. Efficient and viable solutions to ensure enhanced resilience at the country level must be found in collaboration with disaster-prone countries, drawing on their experience and knowledge. Close cooperation between national Governments, which hold the primary responsibility, and international efforts is a prerequisite for the construction of solid structures of disaster risk reduction at the country level. Building local preparedness and preventive efforts is crucial to limiting long-term vulnerability.

In this regard, Sweden supports the important work carried out by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in building disaster-resilient communities. Disaster risk reduction measures must be an integral part of our work in order to ensure a much-needed proactive approach. Let me take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. John Holmes, whose tireless efforts over the past three years have been key to addressing humanitarian needs globally.

As I return to Sweden shortly, our hearts, thoughts and efforts are with the Pakistani people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to The Right Honourable Andrew Mitchell, Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Mitchell (United Kingdom): The British Government would like to express its deep sadness at the loss of life and destruction that has been caused by the floods in Pakistan and our concern for the continuing suffering of the Pakistani people.

I have come straight from Pakistan today and the area devastated by flooding. Yesterday, I visited the village and camp at Pir Sabak, where I saw scenes of total destruction of homes, livelihoods and all basic services, with watermarks over 12 feet above ground level on those walls left standing — an eloquent testament to the destructive force of the wall of water that has swept all before it over 1,200 miles of Pakistan, leaving utter devastation in its wake.

The British Government strongly supports the leadership of the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations in responding to this immense humanitarian crisis. We welcome this special meeting, which brings the international community together at a time of great need to focus on responding to the initial emergency response appeal in connection with the floods.

Britain wishes to offer the most forthright support to the Secretary-General and to respectfully suggest that the response of the international community so far has been woefully inadequate. The only acceptable outcome from today's special meeting is that the United Nations appeal should be fully funded, if not over-funded, by the time we conclude tonight. If this is not the case, the world will rightly draw the conclusion that the international community had failed in its duty.

The British Government has already made a significant commitment of nearly $50 million to the humanitarian response. This is helping to provide 1.5 million people with safe drinking water and sanitation supplies, and nutritional support for the vulnerable women and children so grievously affected. We have also accelerated a programme to provide new bridges to replace some of those washed away by the floods. The Royal Air Force is helping to transport vital equipment, including tents and shelter kits, and Britain is offering bridging expertise to help restore transport networks. We have brought forward our programme of $50 million of bridge repairs in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa.

Yesterday in Pakistan I announced additional support which will provide thousands of people with emergency shelter and will help humanitarian agencies to continue to address specific needs. Today I can announce that Britain will double its contribution to this emergency relief, to just under $100 million. We were amongst the first to rally to Pakistan's support, with the early deliver of shelter, food, medicines and clean water, and we are now identifying additional and specific interventions, working with the Government of Pakistan and our partners in the United Nations and civil society, for this further $50 million of aid and support.

As the Secretary-General has urged, it is now imperative that all wealthy countries step up and give vigorous support to Pakistan.

In addition to this, I would also like to recognize the significant, generous contribution that members of the British public have made through the British Disasters Emergency Committee appeal, raising nearly $25 million so far for the relief effort.

I can also report from my visit and meeting with Manuel Bessler, head of the Pakistan office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), that the cluster system appears to be working well. Britain underlines the need for strong coordination and would urge donors to support the considerable efforts of OCHA on the ground.

We should not lose sight of the immense longer-term effort that will be required to restore Pakistan's infrastructure and rebuild lives and livelihoods. Maintaining progress on economic growth and stabilization and on the vital programme of reform will also be critical — indeed, fundamental — to Pakistan's recovery.

Our resolution today draws attention to the growing effects of climate change, where expert advice suggests that the next 15 years will see an increase of 50 per cent in disaster emergencies. We know that in the first week of flooding in Pakistan more rain fell than in the whole of the previous 10 years.

I would like to conclude by recognizing, on World Humanitarian Day, the extraordinary work of humanitarian workers throughout the world, including those in Pakistan, and in particular those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Finally, no one can have witnessed such scenes of total destruction as I saw yesterday in Pir Sabaq. And now is the time for all of us to respond with commitment and determination to the plight of desperate people in Pakistan, and for the international community to shine a light of hope into the darkness and despair which we are seeing so widely spread across Pakistan today.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Power, Minister of State for Overseas Development of Ireland.

Mr. Power (Ireland): I would like to begin by thanking the General Assembly and His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki for the initiative to convene this special plenary meeting of the Assembly in response to the terrible catastrophe that has befallen Pakistan. I would also like at the outset, on behalf of Ireland, to associate our country with the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. I welcome the additional funding provided by the European Union.

A disaster of this scope and magnitude requires a global response which must have the United Nations at its centre. The people of Pakistan need clean water, food, shelter and medicines, and it falls to us, the global community, to get these life saving supplies to Pakistan and distributed to the population as soon as possible.

This crisis has not occurred in an instant, devastating all before it, as was the case with the Asian tsunami and the Haiti earthquake. In some ways, the full measure of the devastation still remains unseen, completely covered by the flood waters. It is clear nonetheless that the scale of this crisis is of epic proportions. Over 1,000 people have lost their lives. Up to 20 million people have lost everything: their homes, livelihoods, livestock and possessions. It is our global responsibility now to ensure that the people whose lives have been devastated by this tragedy receive the aid they so desperately need as soon as possible. That must be our clear focus today.

The international humanitarian response needs to scale up to meet the enormity of this challenge. The rains and flooding continue and may persist into September, further complicating the relief effort. The damage to infrastructure as well as the sheer number of people affected makes it extraordinarily difficult to

deliver the comprehensive response that is required. But the global community must meet this challenge.

The Government of Pakistan is facing the enormous responsibility of leading the response to this disaster. We are here today to clearly demonstrate global solidarity with the Pakistani people in this humanitarian effort. I would emphasize, however, the vital role the United Nations must play in coordinating the global response to ensure that appropriate assistance is provided to all those in need, as soon as possible.

Coordination and cooperation provide us with the best strategy for an effective humanitarian response. Anything less will result in further loss of life. All of our experience from previous disasters points to the vital importance of delivering aid in a coordinated manner. The importance of putting proper coordination structures in place was a key lesson from the response to the Haiti earthquake earlier this year.

We must also remain aware of the enormous challenges faced by individual people caught up in this crisis. People are understandably desperate to provide for their families, to help feed their children and to rescue those still trapped by the rising flood waters. It is our job to help them.

Today is World Humanitarian Day, and I would appeal to all those responding to continue to observe best international humanitarian principles to ensure that those in need receive the most timely and appropriate assistance. Adherence to those principles is the best way to ensure that aid reaches those most in need.

As I said, this is a moment of global solidarity. We meet in difficult times for all our countries, facing the enormous challenges arising from the international financial crisis. However, what we are witnessing in Pakistan is a crisis threatening the very survival of millions of people. This is a global emergency, and we need a global response.

The Irish Government and the Irish public have already contributed extremely generously to the humanitarian response, and the funds continue to arrive in support of Irish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and aid agencies. The Irish Government has prioritized in recent years the pre-positioning of emergency assistance to enable the fastest possible release of humanitarian assistance by our partners in the event of a sudden onset emergency such as the floods in Pakistan. This strategy has been implemented by pre-positioning funding with a number of key Irish NGOs and through annual contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund. It has provided partners with the necessary flexibility and early resource mobilization which is vital for their initial response.

In addition, since 2007 Ireland has pre-positioned emergency non-food items through a partnership with the World Food Programme. These supplies have proven invaluable in providing early and speedy humanitarian assistance. Earlier this week, a consignment of tents from Irish Aid's stores arrived in Islamabad for distribution through the International Organization for Migration. Ireland is also working with our standby partners to support their operations through the provision of personnel from our Rapid Response Corps.

Ireland has provided further resources to a number of key responding partners in this emergency. We have provided funding support to some of our partner NGOs such as Concern and Trócaire. Ireland also prioritizes the coordination role of the United Nations, and we have provided targeted funds to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for its response. Here, I would like to commend Mr. John Holmes and all of his colleagues in OCHA for their excellent work to date.

I am pleased to be able to announce today a doubling of humanitarian assistance from the Government of Ireland to €2 million in total, but I emphasize that this is our initial humanitarian response for the relief phase. Further funding will be provided once a comprehensive post-disaster needs assessment has been carried out. We believe that this increase is warranted by the evolving situation on the ground.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This year started with the devastating earthquake in Haiti. We continue to work closely with our partners in that country to ensure that the recovery is as effective and comprehensive as possible. Humanitarian disasters do not respect annual calendars, and we are now faced with a further enormous challenge in Pakistan. I would appeal to the United Nations and to all our partner Governments represented here today to keep up the momentum on the humanitarian response to this disaster.

I will conclude by saying that it is particularly appropriate that this meeting is taking place on World Humanitarian Day. We now have an opportunity to save lives and relieve human suffering, which is, after all, the overarching objective of any humanitarian response. Assisting and facilitating the humanitarian response in Pakistan must be a key priority for us all. As a global community, we will be measured by how we respond to the enormous needs of the Pakistani people in this time of unprecedented crisis.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Werner Hoyer, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

Mr. Hoyer (Germany): First of all, let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this special Assembly meeting. His initiative to summon this important gathering is timely and greatly appreciated.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement just delivered by Belgian Foreign Minister Vanackere in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union.

We listened carefully to the Secretary-General's dramatic report on the situation. Personally, I was deeply moved by his account of the plight of the Pakistani people.

Today, Pakistan is facing an unprecedented natural disaster, which has caused tragic loss of life, enormous damage and tremendous suffering. I would like to join those speakers who have expressed their sincere condolences to the Pakistani people. In Germany, our thoughts are with the many victims and their families — with those who have lost everything in this disaster and now struggle to recover.

After having received the dramatic reports from Pakistan and in response to the initial flood emergency response plan of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the German Government immediately started its humanitarian assistance operations.

Today, I can announce that we have just decided to further increase our humanitarian aid to $32 million. This is on top of the German contributions of roughly $18 million to the European Union humanitarian funds, and to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. The German Government's humanitarian aid therefore currently stands well above $50 million. I am particularly grateful to the citizens of my country for their more than 30 million contributions and private donations, and I call upon my compatriots to continue this necessary and valuable effort.

The bilateral funds go to United Nations humanitarian organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, non-governmental relief organizations and German implementing agencies. They serve to distribute food and drinking water and to provide medical care and shelter to the people in need. Numerous humanitarian aid organizations in the affected areas are already working hard to alleviate the suffering of those affected by the flood.

We thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and also express our support for the important work of his Special Envoy, Jean-Maurice Ripert.

In a disaster of such dimensions, the coordination of aid efforts is also of paramount importance. We commend United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator Sir John Holmes and OCHA for their tireless and successful efforts to coordinate the international relief reaching Pakistan.

As my Irish colleague just mentioned, today, 19 August, is World Humanitarian Day. It was created to highlight the role of the many dedicated humanitarian workers who, under difficult and sometimes very dangerous circumstances, provide life-saving aid to the victims of humanitarian disasters. Therefore, allow me to express our gratitude to the Pakistani and international aid workers in the affected areas who relentlessly work for the suffering population. Their contribution to mitigating the consequences of this crisis is invaluable. They deserve our greatest respect.

So far, our assistance has been focused on the immediate relief and early recovery period. But we must not forget that Pakistan will be confronted with far bigger challenges when the full scale of destruction becomes visible. Damaged infrastructure and destroyed crops and livestock will have massive consequences for the livelihoods of the people and the already strained economy of the country. We all agree that the international community must stand by Pakistan, including after the waters have receded and the television cameras have been cut off.

Germany will support Pakistan in meeting the immediate needs caused by the floods, and we will sustain our support through our long-term development cooperation to overcome the structural challenges the nation faces.

We have built a strong partnership in the framework of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan to jointly ensure a strong and stable Pakistan. Germany will continue to work with the Pakistani Government in this framework.

We believe that Pakistan plays a vital role in its region. A stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is paramount for peace in South Asia and far beyond. In the face of this tragedy, our friendship and support is even more important. I can assure the General Assembly that Germany will continue to stand by Pakistan in this challenging time and offer its full assistance.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Osamu Fujimura, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Fujimura (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I offer sincere prayers for the victims of the devastating floods and express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families. I also extend Japan's sympathies to all those affected by the disaster. We express our profound respect for the relief efforts undertaken by the Government of Pakistan, other Member States, the United Nations and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations. We also welcome the decision of the United Nations, at the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and General Assembly President Treki, to convene this meeting.

The recent flooding in Pakistan has caused serious damage, with significant loss of life and property, and has had a grave impact on the entire Pakistani economy and society. In particular, there remain substantial need for emergency humanitarian assistance aimed at addressing the deteriorating hygiene situation and the shortages of water and food, among other problems. In addition, there is an urgent need to rebuild basic infrastructure, including roads, bridges and communications and agricultural infrastructure destroyed in the disaster, as well as to meet basic human needs through improvements in the health and sanitary situation.

The Government of Pakistan and the international community should therefore make a concerted effort to focus on emergency assistance and to address the challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction with a view to stemming the vicious cycle of disaster and poverty. Upon request from the Government of Pakistan and the initial flood emergency response plan for Pakistan announced by the United Nations on 11 August, Japan has swiftly implemented its pledge of humanitarian assistance totalling approximately $14.4 million for those affected by the disaster. Japan's assistance consists of $13 million in emergency grant aid, $200,000 for emergency relief goods and $1.2 million for emergency relief by Japanese non-governmental organizations through the Japanese platform. Japan will continue to actively implement emergency humanitarian assistance based on the local needs of Pakistan in order to promptly provide support for those affected.

In consideration of the great need for transportation by helicopter of relief goods to the afflicted people, the Government of Japan began making the necessary preparations to dispatch helicopters to Pakistan on 19 August. Moreover, in order to alleviate the vulnerabilities of the poor, Japan stands ready to support, to the greatest extent possible, Pakistan's efforts through the phase of emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in a seamless manner and to consider the utilization of expertise and technology derived from Japan's own past experiences with disaster. In this connection, Japan has decided to participate in the damage needs assessment to be conducted by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

The current disaster is one of the gravest natural disasters experienced by Pakistan since its establishment. It may well be said that this is a time in which Pakistan is being put to the test. Japan has been a solid partner of Pakistan since its foundation and the people of Japan have always stood by the people of Pakistan in times of difficulty. In April last year, Japan hosted the Pakistan donor conference, as well as the Friends of Democratic Pakistan ministerial meeting in Tokyo to support our friend. Japan continues to make every effort, in cooperation with the international community, to support the Government of Pakistan towards restoring stability and reconstructing the affected areas. Japan looks forward to the early rehabilitation and reconstruction of Pakistan under the

robust ownership of its Government and people. It is my sincere hope that those who have suffered losses in the disaster will overcome the current difficulties and regain their livelihoods through reconstruction.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Reem Ibrahim Redha Al Hashimi, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Al Hashimi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President for having organized this meeting. Today, we are talking about what we can expect from the General Assembly at moments such as this. I would like to convey our sincere condolences to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan following the terrible material and human loss that his country has suffered following the floods. We reaffirm our solidarity with the people and Government of Pakistan and our desire to continue to provide assistance to save the victims and restore their normal living conditions as soon as possible.

The United Arab Emirates has long-standing links with Pakistan, including our provision of development assistance, directly or indirectly through various international organizations, to Pakistan since 1975. The United Arab Emirates has stood shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan whenever it has had to cope with natural disasters, including the events in the Swat valley. Following the 2005 earthquake, we provided emergency aid, chartered aircraft to deliver medicine and supplies to affected regions. We have done the same since the beginning of the current disaster. We will continue to provide direct assistance in coordination with the competent authorities in Pakistan.

The United Arab Emirates contributions to international efforts include medical supplies, tents, blankets and food. Three helicopters have been chartered to transport victims and casualties. Over and above the immediate assistance provided, we will undertake to allocate $5 million to the United Nations fund to assist victims. We understand the great magnitude of the devastation to the country. Henceforth, international assistance must be commensurate with the needs of rebuilding infrastructure to ensure that the situation is reversed. We thank the Secretary-General for his role in coordinating efforts.

The floods in Pakistan once again sound the alarm bell regarding climate change. We need to take this issue seriously. We need to take tangible measures in order to limit its impact. This will require strengthening capacity and development and measures at the international and local levels. The different aspects of climate change, such as changes in temperatures, need to be borne in mind. We do not want such a thing to happen again.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Ingrid Fiskaa, State Secretary in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Ms. Fiskaa (Norway): Let me join other speakers in expressing my profound sympathies to the people and Government of Pakistan for the human suffering and tragic loss of life caused by this devastating flood. Norway enjoys close people-to-people relations with Pakistan. Many Norwegians whose roots are in Pakistan are now in distress over affected relatives.

The flooding in Pakistan is not only an unprecedented situation and one of the greatest disasters witnessed in recent years; it is more than anything a story of millions of personal tragedies. It is the story of the father who stayed behind to save the family's livelihood and who is worried about its well-being.

The first wave of floodwater caused hardship to millions of people. Infrastructure and livelihoods have been hit, with devastating long-term effects. The second wave of suffering, bringing waterborne diseases, could be even more deadly. We must therefore act now and provide immediate emergency relief to minimize the deadly impact of this second wave while we can.

We meet here today at the United Nations to support the people of Pakistan and to help the Government of Pakistan to coordinate and provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to its affected population, with the assistance of the United Nations. Our united message to the flood victims must be that we will help to save their lives, we will assist them through their suffering now, and we will continue to support them through the recovery phase. I appeal to all donors to ensure that their assistance and funding are made available immediately.

The international community and humanitarian actors should align their support with the priorities of the Pakistani Government and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The initial flood

emergency response plan for Pakistan is an important platform to this end, and we expect it to result in a better response. Good humanitarian coordination means ensuring that help is directed where the needs are greatest and is provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

The One United Nations programme in Pakistan is a close partner of the Pakistani Government, and we welcome the Government's constructive decision to allow the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service to deploy assets in the country. We encourage the inclusion of the education cluster in the forthcoming update of the response plan.

Once again, women, children and the elderly have been the hardest hit by natural disaster. We urge the Pakistani Government and all humanitarian actors on the ground to pay special attention to the different needs of women, girls, men and boys in this dire situation.

Norway has already given 115 million Norwegian kroner — about $19 million — including in Central Emergency Response Fund contributions, in humanitarian assistance to the flood victims. Our funds have been channelled through the response plan to organizations that are close to the flood victims and have long experience in operating in Pakistan. Norway's assistance is already available to the recipient organizations. To support national ownership and leadership, we have also earmarked part of our contribution for the National Disaster Management Authority in Pakistan.

What is unfolding in Pakistan is a reminder that we may be facing a world where disasters made worse by climate change will drive millions of people from their homes, threaten lives and destroy ecosystems. Let this be a reminder that triggers our immediate response as well as our concern in the long term.

Behind every loss of life stands a grieving family. Let our efforts be intensified by the plea of the parents who have lost their livelihoods and now risk losing what is dearest to them — their children. Let this meeting be a call for concerted action — a call on us to act immediately and resolutely in line with our universal humanitarian beliefs — to save lives, alleviate suffering and ensure the human dignity of the people of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Joke Brandt, Director-General for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Ms. Brandt (Netherlands): The Netherlands would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I will keep my statement short by focusing on three points.

First, I would like to thank the President for convening this important meeting. As others have already pointed out, there is no room for complacency. The gravity of the humanitarian crisis and the continued threat of flooding in many areas require an urgent response and a continued strong engagement on the part of us all.

The Netherlands is no stranger to the havoc that water can wreak. We strongly sympathize with the Pakistani people and the affected families who have suffered the loss of loved ones or watched their homes and livelihoods being washed away. The impact of this disaster is unprecedented and almost beyond imagination. The Netherlands, like others, stands ready to help a friend in such dire need.

Secondly, the Netherlands and Pakistan maintain a long-standing relationship, which is also reflected in a structural development partnership. In response to this disaster, the Netherlands — besides making substantial contributions through the European Union and the Central Emergency Response Fund — has contributed €3 million for emergency aid: €1 million channelled through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and €2 million to the United Nations initial floods emergency response plan.

I am pleased to be able to announce that the Netherlands will contribute another €3.6 million to the response plan to be channelled through the World Food Programme and UNICEF, which will bring the total Dutch contribution to the United Nations appeal to €5.6 million and our total contribution to the response to the floods to €6.6 million, or almost $9 million.

Additionally, a consortium of Dutch non-governmental organizations is raising funds among the general public to enable its members to express their solidarity with the people of Pakistan in these difficult times. So far, €2.5 million have been contributed by the Dutch public.

Finally, a disaster of this magnitude requires coordination and cooperation among all organizations and institutions involved. The Netherlands calls upon all stakeholders to work with the Government of Pakistan in a concerted effort to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the emergency operations. As we have seen, the coordinating role of the United Nations, and in particular the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, are crucial to an effective response.

This afternoon, we have again been made aware of the daunting challenges ahead of us. Now, we must also show the resolve and commitment needed to ensure that assistance reaches the people of Pakistan as quickly and effectively as possible.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Attilio Massimo Iannucci, Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Iannucci (Italy): In taking the floor at this plenary meeting of the General Assembly, Italy fully endorses the statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. Steven Vanackere, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, on behalf of the European Union. In our national capacity, both Foreign Minister Frattini and I wish to express to His Excellency Minister Qureshi our deepest condolences for the victims of the immense catastrophe that has struck Pakistan and the solidarity of the Italian people with the people of Pakistan in this moment of great difficulty.

Italy acted promptly to provide immediate assistance to the victims of the flooding in the country. An emergency flight sponsored by Italian Cooperation arrived in Islamabad on 7 August with a 30-ton cargo of basic goods with a total value €330,000, including medicine, generators and water purification units. These items were immediately distributed to the people of Pakistan with the assistance of the National Disaster Management Authority. Italy immediately made a €1-million contribution — €400,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and €600,000 to the World Food Programme — to support humanitarian assistance activities, such as the distribution of basic goods and food and the provision of medical care.

We are in the process of allocating €1 million — €600,000 to UNICEF and €400,000 to the World Health Organization — to support activities in the areas of health and sanitation, as provided for in the framework of the initial flood emergency response plan for Pakistan. Italy is also preparing a €1.5-million bilateral initiative. The local authorities will be consulted to ensure that the initiative fully meets the needs of the affected communities.

In general, Italy is examining its cooperation programme in Pakistan, together with the Islamabad authorities, to ensure that it is compatible with the new priorities of rehabilitating the social and economic fabric of the country in the wake of the tragic floods. This programme consists of initiatives — some already operational, others to be launched shortly — focused largely on the development of areas devastated by the floods that had already been impacted by the democratic Government of Pakistan's fight against terrorist elements in the country.

In fact, we need to keep in mind the Pakistani Government's fight against the Taliban in the areas on the border with Afghanistan, which has thus far had a positive effect on the Afghan theatre and the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. A massive physical and social reconstruction is required in the areas affected by the conflict and by the tragedy of internal displacement, with the ultimate goal of promoting economic development in rural and depressed areas of the country in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty that foments extremism and provides fresh recruits to the armed militancy.

Given the commitment of Islamabad's democratic Government, Italy's action is grounded in the awareness that prompt and effective assistance to Pakistan should address clear and precise political, strategic and humanitarian needs in areas affected by widespread instability and where the interests of the main international stakeholders do not always converge. Therefore, as early as the donors conference for Pakistan held in Tokyo on 17 April 2009, Italy announced €62 million in new development plans for priority sectors, including €2 million for agriculture, €40 million for rural development and microcredit, and €20 million for training, with a geographical concentration on the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. I am pleased that the Pakistani authorities have recently taken the action needed to finalize the related intergovernmental agreement on the last two programmes.

We are also finalizing an €80-million debt-to-project swap that will be used for development and reconstruction projects. In this connection, the Joint Committee on Management has just approved a new series of projects designed by authorities of the Pakistani provinces and Italian partners that address the needs and priorities that have arisen in the wake of the floods.

In terms of projects targeting the post-emergency phase, Italy has already announced that it will allocate €4 million to the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund towards the reconstruction and development of the North-West Frontier area through the implementation of projects to be identified by the damage needs assessment as soon as the rains have stopped.

Our actions and assistance programmes are elements of the broader political and strategic support provided by Italy to the democratic Government of Pakistan at the bilateral level and as a European Union member. President Zardari's visit to Rome a year ago and his meetings with President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano, Prime Minister Berlusconi and Foreign Minister Frattini allowed my country to consolidate this support at the highest levels. It was also an occasion for reinvigorating our economic and trade relations in fields that are essential to Pakistan's economic development, such as agro-industry, marble, gemstones, energy and infrastructure.

As the Foreign Minister's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, I can assure the Assembly that Italy is committed, within both the group of special representatives and the Friends of Democratic Pakistan, to communicating the urgent need for increased assistance to Pakistan. This is a commitment that Italy will reiterate in Brussels on 14 and 15 October at the ministerial meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan.

In conclusion, here too, in addressing a catastrophe that the United Nations has called unprecedented, Italy wishes to convey to the international community the message that it is urgent and necessary to provide concrete assistance to the Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Group, to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this timely meeting to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan. Our thanks also go to the Secretary-General and United Nations organizations for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people affected by the floods.

The Group of 77 and China express their deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Pakistan for the loss of many precious lives and the massive destruction of property and infrastructure caused by the most devastating floods in the history of the country, which have shocked us all.

The Group of 77 and China take this opportunity to convey our assurance of continued support to Pakistan, where millions have been affected by this natural calamity. We also thank the Foreign Minister of Pakistan for his statement on the humanitarian situation in Pakistan in the wake of the floods and for elucidating the need for relief and rehabilitation.

The alarming frequency and ferocity of natural disasters is a major concern faced by the world, and in the past few years many countries have been severely impacted by these disasters. The implications of such disasters in developing countries are particularly immense, due mainly to the lack of resources, their long-lasting consequences on affected populations, and their adverse impact on the environment and livelihoods of millions of people.

We acknowledge the efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan for the rescue and relief of the affected populations, in cooperation with the international community. We emphasize that the needs of those affected by the disaster are urgent and should receive substantial immediate, medium- and long-term assistance from the international community. The Group of 77 and China urge the international community to continue to help Pakistan to cope with the challenges it faces in the wake of these unprecedented floods.

The Group of 77 and China reiterate their commitment and full support for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 as the framework for the provision of United Nations humanitarian assistance. These

principles — neutrality, humanity and impartiality — should remain the basis of all responses to humanitarian emergencies and guide the efficiency and coordination of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations and all relevant organizations.

We would like to thank the President of the Assembly for convening this meeting on World Humanitarian Day, which was designated by the General Assembly to contribute to increasing public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in this regard, as well as to honour all humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause and those who have lost their lives in the course of their duties.

In conclusion, we hope and pray that the people of Pakistan, with the help of the international community, will be able to cope with this massive disaster.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Tag-Eldin (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, I would like to extend our sincerest and most heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Pakistan for their losses and the suffering they have endured during the horrific disaster that has plagued the country over the past weeks.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude for the convening of this important meeting at this timely juncture to consider the current humanitarian situation resulting from the continuous monsoon floods in Pakistan. Moreover, the Movement commends the rapid response of the Secretary-General and the United Nations in support of the relief efforts in the immediate aftermath of the calamity.

Pakistan is currently witnessing one of the gravest natural disasters in its recent history. The current monsoon rains have resulted in floods of unprecedented magnitude that, according to preliminary assessments, have destroyed almost 900,000 homes, hundreds of roads, many bridges, educational and health facilities, electricity transmission lines and Government buildings, affecting nearly 20 million persons and resulting in the loss of crops vital to domestic food consumption and export.

Unfortunately, this disastrous situation could worsen, as it is feared that further heavy monsoon rains will continue, thus increasing the risk of floods in many areas of Pakistan and making the danger of the outbreak of waterborne and communicable diseases even more imminent. The Non-Aligned Movement is ready to join hands with the international community in preparing for this disaster of still unforeseen consequences by taking concerted and expeditious action to avert the expected aggravation of the current situation in Pakistan.

NAM acknowledges the tremendous efforts exerted by the Government of Pakistan to mobilize all available resources to address this serious situation. We must recognize the gravity of the calamity, which has inflicted losses of billions of dollars on the Pakistani economy through the destruction of infrastructure and millions of acres of farmland. Over 3.2 million hectares of standing crops, representing 16 per cent of the total cultivable area, have so far been damaged.

Furthermore, we must be aware not only of the current consequences of the disaster, but also of its repercussions on the livelihood of the Pakistani population in the months to come, in particular in the agricultural sector, where the loss of stored planting seeds and the destruction of standing crops and irrigation systems are likely to lead to severe food shortages in the near future.

As the situation worsens, the resolve of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement grows stronger. Many members of the Movement have, during the past few weeks, committed themselves to contributing to the international assistance efforts and to supporting the Pakistani Government's attempts to alleviate the suffering of millions of persons and to deal with the enormity of this challenge. In this regard, two Egyptian planes have already arrived in Islamabad, carrying hundreds of tons of medicine, medical supplies and equipment, tents and food aid.

Today, the Movement reaffirms the readiness of its members to intensify their efforts and increase their assistance to the Government of Pakistan through bilateral, regional and multilateral emergency relief and development frameworks.

At this juncture, the international community has to augment its efforts not only to address the short-term relief measures, but also to take into consideration the need for the long-term rehabilitation of the affected population and the reconstruction of infrastructure in the affected areas. Now is the time to deliver on the commitments the international community has made to provide predictable emergency relief assistance and aid for the short and long term, to overcome the effects of this disaster.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), on whose behalf I am speaking, is deeply grieved by the ongoing, unprecedented floods in Pakistan, which have taken hundreds of precious lives and had a severe impact on the lives of one in ten Pakistanis.

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for having convened this timely plenary meeting to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan. No one could remain indifferent in the face of all that was said by the Secretary-General at his briefing following his visit to Pakistan a few days ago with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes. We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and look forward to his leadership role in guiding the United Nations system's response to the short- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of Pakistan. We would also like to thank Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, for his briefing on the situation on the ground in his country and on the challenges that Pakistan is facing now and could face in the short, medium and long term.

Resolution 64/294 expresses the international community's commitment to and solidarity with Pakistan in the wake of this unprecedented natural disaster.

As we meet here, heavy monsoon rains continue to lash parts of Pakistan, and fresh flooding in many areas has been reported. Millions of people are being rescued and evacuated from cities, towns and rural areas. While there are initial estimates of the destruction, it will be weeks before the world knows the real cost of the disaster.

The OIC extends its deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan, and to the families of the victims of this unfolding disaster. We also share the pain and hardship being faced by millions of our brothers and sisters who have been rendered homeless by this natural calamity and are living in very difficult circumstances, in the midst of Ramadan. We urge Member States to make generous contributions towards the speedy relief and rehabilitation of those brothers and sisters who await our help in this holy month of Ramadan, a time which teaches us to feel and share the pain of others.

The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference, His Excellency Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, has urged States members of the OIC and their citizens, philanthropists, civil society organizations and the international community at large to contribute towards humanitarian assistance for the victims of these devastating floods in Pakistan. However, we are acutely aware that recovery from disasters of this scale and magnitude takes years and requires substantial, long-term commitment and support from the international community.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference appreciates and acknowledges the efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan for the rescue and relief of the affected populations under extremely difficult and challenging circumstances, in cooperation with the international community. We once again urge the international community to redouble its efforts to help the victims of this enormous devastation. The OIC stands with the people and Government of Pakistan in this unprecedented time. We stand ready to extend help in every possible manner.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ghana.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. Permit me at the outset to express its thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his timely visit to Pakistan and for mobilizing international donor support to assist the

several million people who are in desperate need of food, clothing, shelter and medicine.

What has occurred in Pakistan is a disaster of stupendous proportions, and the African Group expresses its sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan. We have been shocked by the loss of life and the immense damage to infrastructure and property and to crops and livestock, and by the consequent humanitarian crisis.

The international response to the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan is at a critical juncture. As the scope of the disaster unfolds, with the threat of more rain and the potential spread of disease and illness, there is an urgent need for more intensified efforts to alleviate the sad plight of the millions of people affected by this disaster, some of whom are desperate and in dire need of aid. Resources, therefore, are quickly needed.

The cry of distress is a call to rescue, and the African Group pledges its support to the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan; it commend the Secretary-General and the United Nations for the great efforts made in marshalling funds for Pakistan. We also express our appreciation to the Member States who have already provided emergency relief and assistance.

The African Group endorses resolution 64/294, adopted by the Assembly this afternoon, and urges Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector, in the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation, to extend assistance to enable the Government and the people of Pakistan to overcome this tragedy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Sea (Cambodia): I have the honour and the great privilege to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States. At the outset, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening today's plenary meeting for timely consideration of the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan.

Above all, allow me once more to convey, on behalf of all members of the Asian Group, our profound condolences to the Pakistani people and to the bereaved families of the victims of this catastrophe.

Since today, 19 August, is also World Humanitarian Day, declared by the Assembly two years ago, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the brave humanitarian workers who devote their time and energy to the rescue of victims of catastrophes in Pakistan and in other places around the world.

The destructive force of the monsoon rains in Pakistan that began at the end of July has ravaged the country with massive floods. A natural disaster of great magnitude has crippled nearly one fourth of the country, where thousands of towns and villages have simply been washed away. Roads, bridges, buildings, crops and millions of livelihoods have been lost. An initial assessment of the scale of the damage indicates that about 20 million people have been affected by this disaster and that more than 3 million children are at terrible risk of contracting deadly diseases.

Ever since the disaster struck Pakistan, the United Nations has been on the front lines with the countries of the region, which have been very actively engaged in the process. The professionalism and swiftness with which the Organization, especially the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, reacted to this tremendous disaster deserve much praise and admiration. We see that the United Nations and the international community are moving as fast as they can to provide emergency relief and assistance on ground.

The visit of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Pakistan last week was a reassuring gesture to the Pakistani people at this very difficult time. His visit gave the people great comfort at this time of grief and distress.

On behalf of all ASEAN member States, I wish to extend my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and his able team, headed by Mr. John Holmes, for the leadership they are providing in response to the tragedy. We welcome the responses of the international community, Governments and non-governmental organizations in dealing with a catastrophe of this nature. All of us responded out of a profound sense of common humanity. At the head of all is our world Organization, which has been helping millions of people affected and coordinating relief assistance in the country effectively.

We have also taken into account the fact that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has launched an initial appeal for $460 million, which is most urgently required to mitigate the adverse

impacts of the floods and for adequate reconstruction needs in Pakistan. While those relief efforts have restored some measure of normalcy to some affected communities by ensuring the availability of various public services, such as clean water and basic health care, it is very important to note that such valuable support must be maintained during the long rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

In conclusion, I would like to express once again, on behalf of the Group of Asian States, our deepest condolences to the victims of the disaster and to fully share our sympathy and solidarity with the people and Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Suriname.

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to express our profound sympathy to the Government and people of Pakistan on the destruction, devastation, and loss of lives and livelihoods caused by the ongoing and unprecedented floods in Pakistan.

CARICOM would like to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting to address the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Pakistan and ways for the international community to increase its relief assistance to millions of people so heavily affected by this disaster and in urgent need of life-saving assistance.

As a group of States constantly embattled by natural disasters, Caribbean countries are acutely aware of the enormous suffering caused by a disaster of such magnitude, having witnessed earlier this year one of the worst natural disasters in the history of our sister country Haiti. Given the size of our countries, it felt as if the entire Caribbean region had been hit by the massive earthquake.

As the numbers of those affected by the floods in Pakistan are already alarming and expected to rise, there is need for the international community to commit itself urgently to providing continued assistance to the Pakistani people while action is taken to assess the total destruction. In this regard, it is encouraging to note that the generosity of donors is being demonstrated through increased funding. The rapid involvement of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in regard to this disaster strikes a positive note and should be further supported. It is testimony to the very ideals we all hold dear that, in times of enormous suffering, we will come to aid those in their darkest hour of need.

CARICOM has taken note of the briefings by the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and thanks the Secretary-General for his leadership, his swift action and for his previous statement, which should guide the actions of the international community in its support to the Pakistani people. In Islamabad on 15 August, the Secretary-General said: "These unprecedented floods demand unprecedented assistance. The flood waves must be matched with waves of global support".

We also thank the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Qureshi, for sharing with us in this Assembly the dire situation currently on the ground in his country and the actions taken by his Government. CARICOM countries would like to request him to convey to the Government and people of Pakistan the solidarity of the Governments and peoples of the Caribbean region.

In closing, CARICOM, as a society of small nations with limited means at its disposal, stands ready to extend help in all ways within its possibilities and calls upon the international community to stand in unity with the Pakistani people, especially after the floods have ceased to be headlines in the international media but when destroyed livelihoods are yet to be rebuild.

Finally, in my national capacity, I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.